

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All THE YEAR Round

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A TRUE LOVER.

CLARENCE LITTON, though not himself renowned for unselfishness, thought that his brother was doing a selfish and unreasonable, as well as an absurd thing, in asking Theo to go out to him. He was one of those practical men who know everything; he knew all the difficulties in the way, all the hardships that Theo would have to go through; he knew that, if she carried out her romantic plan of starting off at once, she would arrive at the very worst time of year; and he was angry with Gerald for not considering these things. He talked to Theo as much as he dared, and strongly advised her at least to wait a few months; but he soon saw that he might as well talk to the wind that was shaking the lilac-bushes, and after that he said no more. He shrugged his shoulders, and reflected that he was not responsible for the scrapes into which these foolish creatures would no doubt run themselves. If he had not liked and admired Theo, he would not even have troubled himself, as he did, to write a scolding to Gerald. This would be much too late to do any good, but was a little salve to his conscience, for he knew it was originally his fault that Gerald had gone to Africa at all.

Even Ada, who thought Gerald perfect, was surprised that he should have asked Theo to go out to him. She could not understand the violent reaction which had almost driven the young fellow out of his senses, when, after a journey more fatiguing than anything he had ever gone through in his life, he found Theo's letter waiting for him at Kimberley, the mail having

passed him and arrived a few days before. Something in her letter, something she had said about separation, made him think that she would come if he asked her. He had come out with the notion that he could never live in England again. Then, if they still belonged to each other, if she cared for him in spite of the disgrace, what was the use of waiting? Life here without her had seemed terribly hopeless before; it seemed impossible now. He had seen enough already, among the men he had met—enough of their temptations and their wrecked lives—to make him dread and doubt the future, unless she would come and be his guardian-angel.

"I can't live without her," Gerald argued; "and if she cares for me as much as I do for her, she will come."

And so he did that selfish thing, though he hated the country, and the people, and all the surroundings, and knew that they must be more repulsive to her than to him—he told her that he would not wait for an answer to his letter, but would go down to Cape Town and meet the first mail-steamer that left England after she received it—"Just on the chance of your coming to me, my darling."

So that Theo had only one week to make up her mind, and get her outfit, and say good-bye to everything she cared for in England, for her departure was to be as sudden as Gerald's own.

Making up her mind was not a long affair, for she did that while she read his letter.

Then she turned to Clarence Litton and said very sweetly:

"I shall have a great many things to do. Will you help me?"

"With pleasure," said Clarence. "I wish I could escort you out. But of course you will take your maid?"

"I don't want her to go, poor thing, but she says she will," said Theo.

Combe had absolutely refused to be left behind, and as it was impossible to go alone, Theo had consented to take her.

In that week there was no time to think, or talk, or do anything but prepare for that long journey with such a strange end to it.

Clarence was very uneasy, for he thought that this girl did not the least understand what she was doing, but he made no more remonstrances, and devoted himself to her service with all the wit and experience he had—and these were not small. He took her passage in the steamer, going on board himself to arrange everything for her; he thought of everything that she and Combe could possibly want on the voyage, and made Theo laugh by the lists of things he insisted on ordering.

Theo herself was thinking a great deal of Ada, and very little of her own wants. After she had paid a visit to her bankers, and asked them, much to their surprise, to transfer all her money to a bank at Kimberley, she became quite unpractical as regarded herself.

Clarence Litton and Combe—a strange pair of workers—arranged all the luggage as they thought best, and Clarence proposed to himself, though not yet to her, to take her down to Southampton and see her off.

The packet sailed from Southampton on Thursday. The weather was very hot, and Ada, who had been quite miserable since Gerald's letter came, and had shared with Combe all sorts of sad forebodings, which she hid from Theo, had cried herself on Tuesday into a helpless headache. It was their last day together, for Theo was going to take her to Mrs. Keene's on Wednesday, and leave her there, before she went down to Southampton.

The child lay on the sofa in the hot, oppressive afternoon, her face buried in the cushions, with a sob breaking out sometimes. Theo, who had tried in vain to comfort her, was now writing a letter to Lady Redcliff; she had written her other letters the day before—one to Nell, one to Hugh. This time last year they had been her nearest and dearest, and she had been fretting her life away with her grandmother in the square. Now she had written to them both to tell them how they had really lost her—a short, gentle answer to that letter of Nell's which had hurt her so, a still shorter note to Hugh, just tell-

ing him what she was going to do, without any allusion of any kind to the past, and adding at the end, with all her old faith in Hugh: "Will you take care of Wool? I am leaving him with these people for the present. Tell him not to forget me."

Theo had not written to her grandmother; they had had no communication since they parted at Locarno; but that Tuesday morning she had gone alone to the square, and asked a strange manservant if Lady Redcliff would see her. The answer was real pain. No, Lady Redcliff could not see Miss Meynell. The man looked curiously at her, as she turned away with her air of fine scorn; but Theo's heart felt cold and heavy, in spite of her stately looks, and she had spent half the afternoon in composing a letter to her grandmother.

She was very sad and tired that afternoon; the week of hurry and intense excitement was telling upon her. Ada's grief weighed down her spirits; the world was noisy, and dusty, and intensely hot; the rooms were in a state of dismal untidiness after her packing and Ada's. She sat at the table, bending and frowning over her letter; she had pushed her long white fingers through her hair, pressing it back from her forehead, the blue veins on which showed how tired she was. There were dark stains under her eyes, her face was thinner than it used to be; she was carelessly dressed, for in the wild hurry of that week Combe had had no time to bestow on her mistress.

The fat little landlady opened the door, announcing "Captain North," and this was how Hugh saw his beautiful cousin. That day, in the winter, how different she had looked; soft, calm, blooming, noble, when her cruel hardness had crushed all his hopes.

She started violently, and almost screamed, when she heard his name. Ada sprang up from the sofa, and with red eyes and cheeks flew out of the room; and Hugh stood still in the midst of all the confusion, in a sort of dismay, facing Theo, while the landlady shut the door behind him.

"Shall I go away?" he said in a low voice, as he and Theo looked at each other. "I don't want to bore you, Theo."

She stood for a moment quite still, without answering him, only looking at him, and seeing and feeling his sadness, his perfect constancy.

"Oh, Hugh!" she said at last, breathlessly, for all the old days were coming back, the happy years long vanished, when she was a girl, and he was her dear elder brother, always patient, and strong, and kind. He was different from everybody else, dear Hugh; his friendship was worth more, almost, than anything in the world; and for the moment Theo could forget how he had spoilt it, and was so glad, so sorry, to see him again, that she hid her face in her hands, forgetting all her dignity, and sobbed like a child.

"Don't, my dear!" said Hugh under his breath.

He made a quick step forward, standing near her at the end of the table; she had sat down again, still hiding her face, and struggling to control herself.

Hugh was very white, and it is possible that there were tears in his eyes too, as he stood there looking at her.

"I never meant to distress you like this," he said, as she became a little calmer. "What is it?—what is troubling you? I only want to be of use to you, if you will let me, Theo. I know you have made up your mind."

His low, grave tones were very soothing. Theo held out one hand to him, still hiding her eyes with the other. He took it after an instant's hesitation, pressed it gently, and let it go. Then he walked across to the window, and stood there silently for three or four minutes, till at last she spoke to him.

"Come here—come and sit down," she said. "It is very kind of you."

Hugh took a chair, and sat down a little way from her. He looked pale and quiet, his fair moustache and his heavy eyelids drooping; the perfection of his dress was in odd contrast with all that surrounded him; he looked down at his hat and stick, and played with them a little.

Whatever his intentions might have been, this was a moment that tried the honesty of them, but if there was any struggle in his mind, nobody could see it.

"I thought you might like me to take Wool back to-day," he said. "In that case he won't suffer any loneliness, though I don't know how he is to understand what has happened, poor old boy! But you are quite right not to think of taking him with you. He would be a bore; besides which, the climate would probably kill him."

"I never thought of it," said Theo. "Thank you very much."

She had never felt more confused and

miserable. If Hugh had been reproachful, or had shown any violent feeling in any way, she could have been proud, and scornful, and angry. As it was, he seemed to be heaping coals of fire on her head. After the first agitation at seeing him, she began to wish that he had not come; but presently she withdrew that wish, for with every moment it became easier to talk to him. He was so wonderfully considerate and calm; he began asking a few little, insignificant questions about her plans, the time she meant to leave London, the time the ship sailed, and then he said, looking rather more intently at his hat:

"If you don't mind, I should be very glad if you would let me see you off, unless you have made some other arrangement."

"Thank you—oh no; I shall be very glad," said Theo gently. "Combe is going with me, you know."

Hugh nodded.

"Does Lady Redcliff—" he began.

"Grandmamma is very angry with me; she won't see me," said Theo, her voice trembling a little. "I was writing to her when you came in."

"Well—" said Hugh; and then, after a pause, he went on: "Do you know that you are going out at the worst time of year? The spring out there is most unhealthy."

"Yes, I have been told so," she answered, "but I don't think I am a feverish person."

"I should be rather doubtful about that," said Hugh. "I hope you will take every precaution. Have you been led to think that Kimberley is a nice place?"

"I have not heard much about it. No, I suppose not."

"I have known men who have been there," said Hugh gloomily, "and they agreed in describing it as everything that is horrible."

"I hope it is not so bad as that," said Theo. "Don't frighten me, and don't bother yourself about me, Hugh. Don't you know that I have a great deal of strength in reserve, and that all my life I have longed for some real adventures? Travelling in that country must really be great fun. Sleeping out of doors, for instance, and waking up to see the stars shining."

"You!" he said with an almost angry emphasis; but then he looked up, and met a smile which seemed to bring all the old times back again.

Theo was much more like herself now; the high spirit of her girlhood had come

back suddenly, and was lighting up her pale face. Hugh gave a quick sigh, and looked down again.

"You must come out some day and spend your leave with us," she said, and then she knew she was cruel.

He shook his head.

"You are most kind," he said, "but I like civilisation." Then he added: "All your relations have been in a dreadful state of mind for months, including myself, Theo."

"I am glad one of them has come to wish me good-bye," she said. "Yes, John told me, one day when he was here, that I must choose between them and—and Nell agrees with him, and I thought you did too."

"John is an ass—I mean he is not my superior officer," said Hugh hastily. "As for me, I can't afford to lose you altogether, though I did think, not long ago, that I wished never to see you again. And so now I want to ask you a great favour, Theo. Will you grant it?"

"I will," said Theo.

Her ready answer pleased him very much; this trust in him was some slight reward for the long, hard battle in which he had come off conqueror.

"Thank you, my dear," he said in his gravest manner. "I want you to forget last winter, and to let everything be now as if that had never been."

"Very well, Hugh; thank you, I will," she answered very softly, and after a pause she went on: "I wish I had written to you sooner."

"So do I," said Hugh, "for I might have done a great many things for you, and I am afraid you have tired yourself dreadfully—a bad preparation for your start. Now tell me a little more about your arrangements."

There he stayed for hours, and Theo, keeping her word to him, and doing what he wished without any afterthought, told him everything, and listened meekly to a great deal of good advice. Hugh behaved like a hero; he bore her mention of Clarence Litton with calm indifference, and when Clarence actually interrupted them by coming into the room, his manner to him was not absolutely crushing. Clarence went away at once to find Ada, and soon after this Hugh said that he must go.

He took both Theo's hands, and bent over her, and kissed her gently on the forehead, as he used to do when she was a girl.

"Do you remember something you

promised me," he said, "the evening before Helen was married?"

"Yes, I have thought of it," said Theo; "but there are promises one can't keep."

"Don't make any more of that kind," said Hugh. "Then I shall meet you tomorrow at Waterloo, and—in the meanwhile where is Mr. Wool?"

A CHAT ABOUT FOLK-LORE.

THERE are two reasons why folk-lore has many points of resemblance in countries widely separated from one another; first, "the transmission of the myth," as it is called, next the fact that man is man all the world over. Transmission has gone on far more widely than we might imagine. Old books, like Dunlop's History of Fiction, showed how Boccaccio and other Italians merely furbished up the folk-tales which had come in from Asia Minor, where, on their way westward, they were christened Milesian tales. But whence did they originally come? *Aesop's* fables, for instance, everybody knows, are attributed in their Hindoo form to the sage Pilpay. Shall we say, as the philologers do about the commonest words, that they were invented by the Aryas before their dispersion, so that, while the ancestors of the Greeks carried them westward, the Hindoo invaders of the Ganges valley carried them with them to the East? Possibly, but that would not account for their being found, with strangely little alteration, among Kalmucks and such non-Aryan folk.

The strangest case of "transmission" I remember is that of the Milesian tale, which in Petronius is entitled *The Ephesian Matron*. It is not an edifying story—few of these tales are—but it was immensely popular in Europe. Chaucer laid hold of it as well as Voltaire. One finds something like it in that mine of folk-lore, Campbell's Tales of the West Highlands. But the strangest thing is, that the self-same story, with just the local colour changed, is found in China, in a collection of romances, some of which were translated long ago by the Jesuit fathers, Entrecolles and Du Halde. M. Stanislas Julien and M. Abel Rémusat republished them some forty years ago; and now this Matron of the land of Soung has been printed, with fac-similes of the Chinese illustrations, in that dainty way in which no one can come up to the French when they take the trouble to do a book well. All the versions

of the tale are to the discredit of widows. In the Chinese story, the loving wife vows to her sick husband that she will never marry again. She was specially disgusted at a story which he had brought home from his travels, of a widow, young and beautiful, whom he found fanning her husband's newly-plastered tomb because she had promised him not to marry again, at any rate until the plaster on his tomb should be dry. Such a creature, she avers, is a disgrace to her sex; and she breaks up the fan with which her husband had assisted in the drying process, and which the too-easily consoled widow had given him as a memento. The sick man, Tchonang-tsen, dies, and is put into a coffin, which, according to custom, is to stand in the hall during the hundred days of mourning. But, just when the funeral party has broken up, a very handsome, richly-dressed young graduate comes up, explains that he was coming to be Tchonang's disciple for a year, and begs leave to pray at the coffin, and to offer his respects to the widow. She falls in love with him, and, as it is a quiet country place, thinks she may, without scandal, arrange a marriage at once. But in the midst of the feast the young bridegroom falls into convulsions, from which his old servant says he can only be saved by taking in hot wine the brain of a man who has been less than forty days dead. The widow runs at once for the wood-axe, splits open her husband's coffin, and is startled by seeing him stand up and ask what's the matter. "I thought I heard you make a noise, and I came to set you free," says she. But the deception can only last a moment; there are the good things half eaten, there is the graduate making off with his serving-man. So poor Tchonang drinks up the hot wine, writes his wife a set of verses which show her that he sees through it all, and while she, after the Chinese fashion, goes away and hangs herself, he breaks up all the crockery, tears the furniture to pieces, behaves otherwise like a Chinaman in a passion, sets the house on fire, and goes off to find the sage Lao-tsen, under whom he becomes a celebrated philosopher. There is this difference between the Chinese and all the other versions—that infidelity gets punished, and that the widow, however indecent her haste, still keeps to what she deems propriety. People are more modest in China than they were at Ephesus, or in mediæval Italy, or in the Europe of the Fabliaux.

Well, that is one instance of a transmitted story. How did it get to China?

We are apt to underrate the powers, and limit the range, of the professional story-teller. He has been at work from time immemorial; and whenever he hears a good story he passes it on and on, just as the tricks of jugglers are passed on, so that you see the same thing done in a quiet court in the east of London that your brother in India has looked on at by torch-light at some Raja's garden-party. Where any particular story first began, who can tell? It was made up by somebody who did not write it down and publish as Scott did *Waverley*, but told it in the bazaar, and there somebody else listened, and then and there carried off some sort of a version of it, perhaps all the way from Candahar to Bokhara. Thence it goes still farther, and by-and-by comes back westward, in more or less wholly new dress. We remember how large a Chinese element there is in the Arabian Nights, and the process is always going on.

When a bit of folk-lore, just like the Aryan, crops out among the Zulus or Dyaks, the course is not quite so plain. There are no great caravan-roads, like that along which silk had moved westward long before Virgil's time, for "the myth" to be transmitted along. But still it may be handed on, via Egypt and Kordofan, into Central Africa, and thence southward; for among story-tellers everywhere, there is a freemasonry which is sure to lead to an interchange of one another's wares. And between stories and folk-lore there is no hard and fast line; one runs into the other; so that though, no doubt, there is in every people a mass of self-evolved tales, these are seldom easy to distinguish. They tell us that "cat's cradle" is popular in most of the Polynesian groups. Is that transmitted, or specially invented? It is the same with the yet more widely-spread game of "How many fingers do I hold up?" The controversy about originality in these matters reminds one of that about creation. Did foxes, for instance, or deer, or any other widely-diffused creatures, come into being independently in all or most of the countries in which they are now found; or, was each kind produced in some one centre, and thence distributed?

Another way in which myths have grown up, need only just be mentioned. Missionaries are answerable for a good many of them. Somebody makes his way

far into the depths of heathendom, as the Nestorian Christians did into the heart of China, leaving crosses on old gateways to astonish the traveller of to-day who thought no Christian had ever been so far till he came. The name and memory of the old preacher perish, but some distorted notion of his doctrine has laid hold of the popular mind; and there is the foundation of a myth. Such myths grow up very quickly. In Polynesia one finds them, though known missionary effort among those islands dates but from yesterday. In South Africa there are unmistakable traces of it, and yet more in America. The whole legend of Hiawatha bears signs of having been touched up with Christian colours. In The Field of Bones, one of the tales collected in Bengal at the mouths of old village women by a native clergyman, Lal Bechari Day, there is a distinct reminder of the well-known chapter in Isaiah—only a reminder, for the story is full of the giant cannibals, Rakshasis, who abound in most Hindoo stories. We remember how early among the hill-tribes Nicholson became deified; the villagers were "doing poojah" (worship) to his picture under the name of Nikkul Seyn; and so, among the Makololo, the peacemaking of Livingstone has already become a legend.

Here is something that is found in Gorman and Campbell, and all the European collections. A man and his wife eat enchanted meat, after which the woman bears a son, Rombao, who comes into the world ready equipped with gun and spear and dog. By-and-by he meets a whale, and wants to drink. "Why should you drink my water?" says the whale. "Because I am thirsty." "Pay me a price for it." "No; let us come and fight." They fight, the whale is killed, and Rombao cuts out his tongue and salts it. Now the country round was dry, and a great chief gave up his daughter to buy water from the whale. But three days had passed, and the wind came out as a sign that the girl was dead. So the chief sent his captain and some soldiers, and said: "Go and see if the whale has eaten my child." The captain went and found the whale was dead. Then he said to the soldiers: "Come, let us fire guns for two days, and go to the village and tell that it was I who killed the whale. Then the chief will give me his daughter to wife, and I will pay you with much goods." So they fired guns, and went back and told

the chief: "The captain has killed the whale." "Very well," said the chief, "then I will give him my daughter to wife." When the marriage-day came, Rombao went to the village, and found all the people gathered together. The girl was speechless, and her mother said: "Do you wish that captain to marry you?" She did not answer, but went on weeping. Her father said: "But she will marry that captain." Rombao asked: "Why is the captain going to marry her?" They said: "Because he has killed the whale." "But where's the whale's tongue?" asked Rombao. "Yes, we want to see the tongue!" shouted they all. So the captain sent his men to bring its tongue, and they looked, and the tongue was wanting. So they came back, and said: "The whale has not a tongue; it is rotten." "That is false," replied Rombao. "That captain did not kill the whale; it was I. Wait now, and I will go fetch his tongue. So he brought the tongue to the chief, and the chief said: "Very well; do you take my daughter to be your wife." Then the chief took much goods and gave to Rombao. Then he killed the captain, and his men likewise.

Now will any one venture to say how much of this is home-grown, and how much is a faint memory of Perseus and Andromeda, itself "transmitted" to Greece from the Syrian seaboard, dovetailed on to a story which in Campbell is called The Sea-Maiden, and in Dasent's Norse Tales appears as Short-shanks? It is not from yesterday that a connection dates between the Malabar Coast and Zanzibar. Since our cruisers have been dhow-catching and carrying the rescued captives over to Bombay, there is in that city quite a colony of "sidi-boys." You can find them on the P. and O. steamers as stokers. And they, of course, carry with them shreds and patches of Hindoo lore when they go back. And, in like manner, Rombao may have been "transmitted" across sea hundreds of years ago; or it may have gone round by way of Egypt, or by Abyssinia, whither has often flowed a stream of Arab colonisation, and of which the folk-lore is as yet unexplored. Anyhow it seems like a transmitted tale; whereas the following, found in different forms in almost every country in the world, is more like a case of home-grown work. A man lived by setting traps; and night after night a crocodile came and ate the bait. So, at last, the man, being

grieved, set the trap in another place, and put nothing in. Thereupon the crocodile, searching and finding nothing, went into the trap and was caught. When the man came in the morning, he was going to spear the crocodile, but it said : "Let me out, and I will go home and pay you for what I have stolen." He let it out, and it leapt on his back, sticking its claws into his body, and saying : "Carry me to my home." A hare saw them going through the water and called out : "Man, where are you off to ?" "I am carrying this chief to his home, that he may pay me for my goods." "I do not hear you," replied the hare ; and, when the man said it over again, he cried : "I do not hear you. Are you making a fool of me ? Come near ; come near." "Listen, O chief !" said the man. "The hare says we must go back a little." So they came to the bank, and the man repeated the same words. "Yes, that is right," said the hare ; "but first come off his back there." Then the hare asked : "Man, how did you set your trap ? Let me see it." So the man set it. "Ah, chief, pray how did you get in ?" was the hare's next question. "I passed here, I passed there, and I went—" Good ! there was the crocodile caught. "Now, O man ! kill that vermin," said the hare. "It wanted to eat you." So the crocodile was killed ; and one is reminded of the way in which the imp is got into the bottle again, and of other tales in our own nurseries and in learned collections.

The hare in these East African tales answers to Uncle Remus's Brer Rabbit. When hare and hyena have married two girls, who, instead of the customary betrothal-gift of calico, ask for lion, leopard, and python skins, the former answers the latter's objection that "the lion is terrible," with the bold assurance, "I will try to kill a lion, that my wife may rejoice and say 'my husband is strong.'" So he takes salt and bangles, and putting the latter on his legs, comes to the lions' village. The chief lion takes him for a woman and says : "You are my wife." But he complains : "Your chief wife abuses me." So the lion killed her and her children. "Take off their skins," said the hare, and he and the lion were left alone. "My husband, your eyes frighten me." "Take them out," said the eager lion. The hare put out the lion's eyes, killed and skinned him ; salted and hid the skins, and went to the leopards' village. Here he did the same thing, and,

moreover, before he would allow the leopard to come near him, he said : "My husband, I want python's skins," and the leopard went and got them for him. So now, carrying his booty, he met the hyena. "Ugwi ! how have you slain these skins ?" asked he. "I slew them with my bag of salt," was the reply. The hyenas went to get his skins, and began to attack a lion. The lions were angry and asked : "Is it war that you want, O hyena ?"—and they killed him. And the hare went for his wife, and she rejoiced and said : "My husband is clever ;" and the hare stayed at that village and became a great chief.

All who can get hold of it should read Rev. Duff Macdonald's *Africana*, each volume of which ends with a collection of tales, of which I have selected a sample. Mr. Macdonald was at Blantyre, the mission which got into the newspapers on account of a native thief being flogged. "Thieving must be checked," judged Mr. Macdonald. It was about time, seeing that a white man, superintending the making of a road, woke one morning to find his wardrobe limited to what he had gone to sleep in. So the thief got nine hundred lashes—very gentle ones, the native law being "death to the thief." However, our business is not with the way in which the Blantyre mission was carried on. Mr. Macdonald as a folk-lorist is delightful. In "the dead chief and his younger brother" he reminds us of Souvestre's Breton legends. The younger brother has all the dead man's wives, and, indeed, most of his tribe, carried off by a neighbouring king. He goes to his brother's grave to consult him, as King Latinus does in Virgil, as chieftains do in the old Gaelic tales. His brother gives him four small bags, and explains their use, and bids him follow the plunderers. Magic obstacles are thrown in his way. First there is a large tree lying across the road ; so he opens the first bag, and a wood-moth comes out and gnaws a passage. Next, the path is blocked by a vast rock ; so out of the second bag comes a manis, and digs a subway. Then there is a broad river, across which a spider from the third bag spins a thread. At night he sits down near the king's village, and opens the last bag, out of which comes a rat that creeps into the king's basket, and when he takes off his eyes (spectacles) the rat carries them to the chief. At dawn the king says : "Let all assemble with their prisoners, that I may see them." But he

cannot see them, for "his eyes" are gone. And the chief shouts from across the stream : "Give me back my people. I also have captured in war. The eyes of the king have I carried off." So the king said, "Young men, give him up his people," and they were returned.

Brer rabbit is as helpful to man as the hare is in that crocodile story. When the lion wants to kill the hunter for having slain his bucks, rabbit expostulates, and says : "I can show you better meat not far away." So he leads him to a pitfall where lived a serpent, and persuades him to go in ; and when he is in, he calls the man, and bids him light a fire at the pit's mouth, and kill the lion.

If the lion is a fool, the elephant is no wiser. He and rabbit strike up a friendship, and agree to sow their garden. "Yes, and let us first roast our seeds," said rabbit. The stupid elephant roasted his, but rabbit only roasted a very few ; so that, when the rains came, the elephant's garden was bare, while rabbit's was full of pumpkins. Then said the elephant, "My friend has deceived me," and he took to stealing rabbit's pumpkins by night. "I wonder who steals my pumpkins," said rabbit. "I don't know," said the elephant. So rabbit made a drum, and went with it secretly inside a pumpkin. The elephant came as before, and ate that pumpkin among the rest, and there was the rabbit drumming away in his stomach. So the elephant died, and people said, "Meat has died for us here." And when they opened the body they found rabbit and his drum, and said : "Yes ; no wonder the elephant died."

Here is another case of the helpful hare. A man shot a buffalo. Cutting off the hind-legs, he left it till to-morrow, and in the night a hyena came and ate its way in, and got caught in its ribs. When the man came, he begged hard, and said : "Come to my cave, and I'll pay you." So the man went, and hyena showed him his wife big with young, and said : "Come again at the moon's end, and I will give you three children because of your meat." So the hunter consented. But the hyena went to a lion, and said : "Chief, come and live in this cave, and at the moon's end you shall have a hairless animal." "Do you mean a man ?" said the lion. "I mean a man." So the lion came and waited ; and at the set time the man came, and was startled to see lion's feet. However, being strong in heart, he went in ; but when he saw the

lion and his wife he wanted to go back. "Why do you go back, my meat ?" said the lion. "I am not your meat," replied the man ; "but you ate my meat, and told me to come for pay at the moon's end." "No, I did not eat your meat ; it was the hyena ; and he told me you would come." While they were quarrelling, the hare came up, and said : "Chief, leave off your dispute. O lion, thy elder brother sent me to tell you not to eat the man." "Get away," said the lion. But the hare pulled out some honey and some snuff, and the lion, acting just as a native king would if eatables appeared in the midst of the most exciting law-case, asked for snuff, and got some, and then wanted honey. The hare gave him a taste, and he wanted more. "You must first let me tie your tails together." Then the lion said to his wife : "Listen, wife ! Do you want to eat sweets ?" "Yes." So their tails were tied together, and then the hare took away the man, and, laughing at the lion when he asked for the sweets, threw a stone into the cave, and shut the lions in.

Kindness to animals is as sure of a reward as in the old German tales. A python is overtaken by a bush-fire ; a man comes by with an axe in his hand. "O chief, hoe to save me !" said the beast. "If I hoe to save you, you would devour me." "No, I would not." So the man hoed ; and by-and-by the python becomes a young lad, and gets the man to carry him on his back through a hole in the mountain into Python Town. Here he brews beer (the plan for cementing friendship), and they sit and drink and drink. At last the man says, "I go home now ;" and the python gives him four bales of calico and a bottle which, if pointed towards his enemies, will make them all dead men. Once he leaves his bottle in the hut, and the enemies take it, and capture him ; but (as in the case of the king's eyes) a rat gets it back for him, and just when they are bringing him out for execution, he points it at them, and they are all dead and gone, and he and the rat divide their land and goods.

Ridicule comes out in many of the stories as a powerful engine in woman's hands. A man shows he cannot eat bran-porridge while he is tasting some. In comes his wife, and he puts it in his hat, saying, "My wife will laugh at me for changing my ways ;" and when it trickles down, he appeals to her : "Wife, do not tell people that I was seen with bran-

porridge on my head, and I will pay you with goods." So she brews beer, and gathers the neighbours for a dance, and the two are good friends again.

A deadly bottle comes in in another story, which reminds us of many in Grimm and elsewhere. The girl who gives pleasant answers to the leopard and other beasts, gets helped from one to the other, and finally recovers her child. Her companions, who answer crossly, "We don't want to be questioned by you," get no information; and at last God (Mlungu) kills them with a bottle of lightning. Mlungu, by the way, is only half friends with man, though when the sun, whom He had made, "gave way to fierceness," he took rain, and cooled down the sun. According to one account, rain was not His gift. "People who died became God, and they said: 'Come, let us give our children rain.'" Others refused, and said: "Come, let us make pots and fill with water." And the others said: "Let us break a pot; let us give our children rain." But the usual idea is that when men die, Mlungu takes men to heaven that they may be His slaves, because they ate His people (the beasts) here below. For in the beginning, there were no men, but only God and beasts. And a chameleon set his fish-trap in the river, and day by day he found fishes even when the otter came and ate them. And one day, very early, he found a man and woman in his trap. So he said: "To-day things unknown have entered my trap. I wonder if I ought to take them?" He did take them, and carried them to Mlungu, who then lived here, before He had gone away to heaven. "Master," said he, "see what I have brought to-day." "Set them down," said Mlungu, "and they will grow." So they grew, the man and the woman; and Mlungu said, "Wait till I call my people," and He went, calling all the beasts of the earth and all the birds. And when they were assembled, He said: "We have called you for these strange beings that chameleon found in his trap." All the beasts said: "We have heard" (i.e. they had not a word to say). Next day they saw a wonder—these new creatures making fire with a fire-stick. Then they killed a buffalo and made roast; and so they went on with all the beasts. Then Mlungu said: "Chameleon, I was told you were bringing in puzzling creatures among us. See now my people are being punished. How shall I act?" So the chameleon ran

up a tree; and Mlungu said, "I cannot climb a tree," so he went off to call the spider; and the spider went on high and returned again, and said: "You, now, Mlungu, go on high." Mlungu then went with the spider on high; and He said: "When these new creatures die let them come on high here."

But I shall leave no room for the Hindoo stories which I meant to contrast with these East African ones. Here is my last from Mr. Macdonald, and it is notable because its phrase, "Death and sleep are one word, they are of one family," is exactly that of Homer: "At first people did not die, and they lived without sleep. And there came a woman that could not walk, and she said, 'Sleep;' and two slept, and one of them she caught by the nostrils. Then she cried, 'Arise,' but the one she had caught could not move. So she said: 'I am sorry; I have done wrong. He cannot breathe. Now mourn for him.'" So the people mourned three days; and then they said, "Dig a grave," and they buried him. The woman that could not walk had done mischief.

Of the Hindoo legends, the most striking feature is their wildness. Is it a protest against the dull monotony of life in India? Or is life less monotonous to the native than to the European? Lal Behari's tales, anyhow, are wilder than the wildest bits of the Arabian Nights. A young man puts an egg of the tootoonia bird into a cupboard, and out of it comes a babe that grows into the loveliest girl the world ever saw. The mannik stone in some snakes' heads is worth the wealth of seven kings. In a certain city an elephant is kingmaker; but the king of his choice only reigns a day, for out of the queen's mouth comes a thread-like snake which slays him in the bride-chamber. A long-lost son, who had fallen in love with his mother, and has mounted the cow-house roof that he may break in and carry her off, happily hears his life's story from two calves that are quietly discussing him below. Ghosts haunt peepul-trees, and are as tricky as mediums at a séance. A wife, going out of doors on a dark night, accidentally knocks up against a Sankchinni, white lady ghost, that sat on a low branch. The revengeful creature at once took her by the throat, thrust her into a hole in the tree, and went in, taking her shape so completely that the mother-in-law, that universal inmate of the Hindoo hut, was deceived. The only difference

was that, whereas the wife had been weak and languid, the ghost was brisk and active. "She has turned over a new leaf; so much the better," said the mother-in-law, when the errands and the cooking were done in next to no time. But one day the old woman caught sight of the ghost fetching something from the next room ghost fashion, by stretching out a long arm—for ghosts can stretch their limbs a great way, though not so far as Rakshasis can. She said nothing, but told her son; and they watched, and before long they saw the kitchen hearth ablaze, though they knew there was no fire in the house. Looking through a chink, they saw that the wife had thrust her foot into the oven, and that it was burning like a bit of wood. "She's a ghost," they whispered, so they went for the Ojha, who tested her by burning turmeric under her nose. She proved her ghostship by screaming, and was then beaten with slippers till she confessed, and showed where the real wife was, and was again beaten till she promised never to do the family any further harm. The poor wife must have been a bad bargain after the active ghost, for she was almost dead, and very slowly got back to her usual weak health.

If you are a Brahmin, the best ghost to have to do with is that of a Brahmadaitya—a Brahmin who dies unmarried. A poor Brahmin undertook, like "Mary, the maid of the inn," to fetch a branch at midnight from a ghost-haunted tree just outside the village. Rash men had tried, but their necks had been wrung. However, the Zumidar's offer of one hundred bighas of freehold land was too strong a temptation for the starving man. So he went; but at one rope's distance from the haunted tree his heart misgave him, and he stopped under a vakula-tree, in which lodged a Brahmadaitya. The "blessed ghost," hearing of his trouble, at once compelled the other ghosts to act like slaves of the lamp. They finished cutting the bough, for putting knife to which they were just going to tear the Brahmin in pieces. And when the land was given they reaped his harvests, and brought him flour and ghee, and sugar, and curds, etc., enough to feast a thousand brother Brahmins. And as no good deed to a Brahmin is ever done in vain, the Brahmadaitya was at once freed from his ghostly life, and taken to heaven in a fire-chariot.

While reading these tales, one seems to get on intimate terms with these

Hindoo villagers, where the stepmother hates her step-sons as she did in old Greece; where the wife is as dutiful and self-devoting as Alcestis herself; where the duty to guests is as strongly felt as in Admetus's household. One thing is worth noting, the Rakshasis—"raw-eaters," supposed to be some dim remembrance of an aboriginal cannibal race—are so terrible and destructive as to eat up whole cities, and even when, from some whim, one of them has taken a human husband, she is so afflicted with perpetual hunger as to be obliged to get up at night and devour all the meat in the larder. Yet the cross between man and Rakshasi is splendid, physically and morally. The son of one of these marriages is "like a god," and when his mother kills and eats his father and his human wife, he rescues his half-brother though he has to slay his mother in so doing. These "raw-eaters" are just like our giants in their keen scent of mortals who come within their reach.

"Hye mye khye,
A human being I smell!"

is their cry. They are, too, like the "giant who had no heart in his body," and who appears under various forms in so many European stories. A king's daughter, the survivor of a whole city, whom an old ogress took a liking to and spared, worms her secret out of her as soon as the arrival of the pre-destined prince has set her wits working. She falls a crying; and when the Rakshasi asks why, she replies: "Mother, I weep because you are old, and when you die I shall surely be eaten by one of your fellows." "When I die! Why, foolish girl, we Rakshasis never die. We are not immortal, but no human being can find the secret on which our life depends. The life of all this clan that dwells here is in yonder tank. In the midst, in deep water, is a hollow glass pillar, at the top of which are two bees. Whoso brings up both at one breath, and kills them without shedding a drop of blood, will kill us all at one blow. If a drop of blood touches the ground a thousand more of us will start to life immediately." That is one striking resemblance to Western tales that I have noticed in Lal Bechari's budget. Here is one more: If the magic pot (handi), out of which issues a hundred demons, is turned up and covered, the demons straightway disappear. For this, there is a well-known Western parallel. And *The Adventures of Two Thieves* have a smack of the Norse Mather Thief, itself based on the old

Egyptian story, told by Herodotus, of the brothers who robbed the treasure in the pyramid. The Hindoo story, however, is much more elaborately worked out. One want alike in Hindoo and African legends, is the fairies ; and these old friends reappear strangely enough in Maori land. The Maoris say they are as grasshoppers for multitude, and just like the English to look at, fair, with freckled skins and red-brown hair. As among the old Gaels, men woo and win them to wife occasionally, and Maori children are carried off and changelings put in their place. They fish by night, sing at their fishing—men have even learnt verses of their songs. So from one end of the earth to the other we have similar ideas about the supernatural, expressing themselves in strangely similar folk-lore.

THE ENGLISH IN CAIRO.

(NOTES OF A PRIVATE SOLDIER.)

IT may be said that the sequel to the successful invasion of a country, usually, in the first place, takes the form of the occupation of its capital city by the victorious forces of the invaders. Under circumstances of this kind, the writer found himself in a famous—perhaps the most famous—oriental city, subsequent to the total overthrow in the field of the national army. The native array had been destroyed, or entirely disorganised and scattered by one decisive, crushing blow ; and the small garrison of the capital surrendered—somewhat after the fashion of an oriental fortress of earlier times—almost on hearing the trumpets of our cavalry before its gates, and without the firing of a single shot on either side.

Soon after the capitulation, the mass of our regiments began to arrive in the city or in its immediate neighbourhood. Some travelled by rail, but the greater part of them approached by march route. The former and more expeditious mode of crossing country fell to our share ; and after a rather tedious journey, our train of bullock and other waggons was dragged into the station by a painfully asthmatic locomotive, which seemed to be all but overcome by its late exertions. On the platform, to receive us, was a Royal Duke, accompanied by a little group of officers in smart new uniforms, which latter presented a marked contrast to our own travel-stained, and, in many instances, ragged garments. The public were kept

without the terminus by a staff of policemen, clad in white, and wearing swords, and whose general appearance had nothing in common with that of the, to us, more familiar “bobbies” of our native insular regions. Emerging from the station, amid a great din created by the vigorous practice of their art by the drummers, we saw a considerable crowd gathered together in the street. The component parts of this assembly had a very tatterdemalion look about them ; and we observed that the conventionalities of dress common in Western countries were here reversed—the women wearing the most distinctive portion of a man’s attire, while the men were clad in voluminous gowns reaching to their feet. We marched away along a series of streets, some of them lined with handsome buildings, others with houses of mean aspect. For the most part the thoroughfares had a deserted air ; the houses and shops were closed, and apparently uninhabited ; a few cafés alone were open, standing, like the gin-palaces of our own metropolis, chiefly at corners. After proceeding for a mile or more, we passed a lofty and showy edifice. In front of this a guard of white-coated soldiers was “turned out.” It struck us at the time that these men had quite a healthy and soldier-like appearance, very different from the characteristics of their unfortunate comrades, whom we had lately seen by thousands as prisoners of war, and in hundreds lying slain on the battle-field. Soon after we had left this place behind, we entered a spacious square, with fine trees, and splendid houses around its sides. Here there was a great concourse of the natives, through which we marched into a barrack parade-ground, and there passed our first night in the historical city.

At daybreak we marched out into the middle of the square, for it had been decided that there we were to take up our quarters. No tents had as yet been provided for our reception, and as the hours passed on it became evident that the approaching night would needs have to be spent in the open air, a condition of things, however, to which, from two or three months’ experience, we were all well accustomed and inured. It was also apparent that our bivouac was the centre of attraction for idlers of all ranks in the city ; and from the crowds of these observers we judged that the place was by no means so deserted as the comparatively empty streets of the previous evening had led us

to infer. Their curiosity becoming a little obtrusive, a strong guard was mounted to keep the populace at a respectful distance, and the duty of the men thus employed was neither easy nor pleasant. Our sentries were efficiently seconded in their efforts to preserve a clear space for the camp by the policemen in white. These officials enforced their orders on the rougher portion of the crowd by a very liberal application of the stick—not the truncheon of the English "officer," but long canes, with which they administered severe thrashings to the more disorderly members of the community.

The people who surrounded our camp were of all classes. The wealthier sort came up at a smart trot on donkeys. These beasts were relatively much finer specimens of quadrupedal, than their riders were of human nature. But the poorer varieties of the ass tribe were, though considerably less obstinate, little better treated than their brethren in more civilised countries. Of the fair sex, many dames, with veiled countenances, arrived on donkey-back. Nothing of the visages of these ladies could be seen save two great black eyes, which remained uncovered. Stretching from the bridge of the nose to the roots of their hair in front was an extraordinary metal contrivance, which we supposed, rightly or wrongly, had something to do with maintaining the veil in its proper position. The appearance of this article precisely coincided with that of the little brazen tube which covers the muzzle and protects the "sight" of a rifle, when not in use. From this resemblance the heroes of the late campaign called the strange appendages "sight-protectors," a name they retained during our occupation of the square. The humbler classes of women—at this period at least—were conspicuous by their absence. But the "lords of creation" represented here were of all kinds, from putative nabobs down to miserable and horribly repulsive-looking beggars. A large number of the men of the lower orders were blind of one eye. We were aware, before noticing this circumstance, that ophthalmia was a scourge of this country from the occurrence of some unfortunate cases in our own ranks; but when we got to be on more familiar terms with the townspeople, we gathered that it was customary with many young men to destroy an eye in order to escape the conscription. Perhaps there was some truth in this; at any rate, the amount of partial and even complete

blindness was very remarkable. Besides the actual natives, there was a considerable sprinkling of Europeans present, who probably chiefly belonged to southern continental nationalities. These gentry already were commencing to attempt to "push" trade by offering for sale cigars, fruit of various kinds, and sundry small wares, but not, as yet, to much purpose.

Looking over the heads of the encircling crowd, we saw that one side of the square—which latter was probably about ten acres in extent—was entirely occupied by a palace, a vast group of buildings of considerable architectural pretensions; and, as we could see, it was already tenanted by our soldiery. On another of the sides was a second palace, smaller than the first, but situated in really beautiful gardens, luxuriant with tropical vegetation, and enclosed by a highly ornamental railing. A third side, lined with fine houses, was bisected by a street shaded by well-grown acacias, and having a great display of bazaars, cafés, and shops of all sorts and sizes. The remaining side of the square consisted of a high iron railing, which divided it from a parade-ground and barrack occupying a large area of ground. The surface of the extensive square was not paved or macadamised in any fashion, but consisted—as we found before morning—merely of clay.

Darkness came on in due course, and our visitors gradually melted away. So silent was the place before midnight, that we felt it difficult to realise that we were lying in the heart of a great city. Having no covering of any kind as yet, we reposed on mother earth, fully dressed, till early morning, when, from minarets in the neighbourhood extraordinary chants and howls were given forth by men, who, we were afterwards informed, performed duties corresponding to those of priests. At certain hours this shouting occurred, and besides, to a certain extent, rendering the morning bugle superfluous, it gave us a high opinion of the vocal powers of this variety of priesthood.

While in the desert we had noticed that in this climate a heavy dew fell by night; but now its damping qualities were seen to far greater advantage. Arising from the ground, we found that the clay, aided by this abundant dew, had been during the night converted into an extremely adhesive kind of mud. Our clothes, of course, had a layer of this material plastered all over them. An

unconscious sleeper who turned about, in addition to rendering his position more comfortable, attracted to his garments another layer, and so on, according to the number of turns, till an inch or so of mud adhered to his garments. We had long slept in the open, but sand, and not clay, had formed our resting-place. The appearance of the men with this coating of mud was ludicrous; and on experimenting, it was found useless to attempt to remove it till it had dried, which was not very long, under the potent rays of the sun.

In the course of the ensuing day, a sufficient supply of capacious marques, of the sort used by the troops of this nation, were given over to us. These, however, consisted of a canvas roof solely; they had no walls or sides; but notwithstanding this defect they suited our wants admirably, and each provided a shelter alike from the sun and dew—rain was unknown—for thirty or forty men. On the clay, to whose properties we were now fully alive, mats were spread; and we soon began to make ourselves at home with the aid of these unwonted luxuries. Having obliterated from our clothes—once red, now brown, or nearly black—as far as possible the traces of the mud, towards the evening we sallied forth to view the famous city. Taking the street, by which we had approached our present domicile some forty-eight hours before, we had not gone far along its shady footway, ere we noticed that its bordering houses had undergone quite a transformation during this short interval. Cafés innumerable had sprung into existence, with chairs and tables placed outside under the wide-spreading trees. There were English cafés; French, Italian, and Highlanders' cafés; the artillery café, and the guardsman's café. A few—but only a very limited number—of these places of entertainment were devoted to the sale of coffee, and a compound which probably was intended to represent chocolate; together with cigarettes, and tobacco in other shapes. The vast majority of them were what we may call "fully licensed houses," in which a fiery liquid was stored in bottles labelled "cognac." No pains had been spared to attract attention to all of these houses by immense signboards, by the display of flags of various nations, and by men stationed on the street to solicit a visit from the passers-by. Donkeys occupied positions at intervals in the streets, much in the same

way as we had in other cities seen cabs or hansoms doing. Having for many weeks been subjected to a course of semi-starvation, the happy thought of a good supper began to occupy a place in the minds of a small party of us. Passing through beautiful public gardens, where a band was discharging music to a large assembly, we at last fell upon what seemed to be exactly the kind of eating-house of which we were in search. We entered, and saw that we were the only guests. A very obsequious waiter appeared, with a bill of fare in one hand, and a fly-whisk in the other. Over the former printed matter we held a consultation. It was replete with information, which was, however, in a language not very familiar to us; but finally a sufficient number of plates of what appeared on the card as "mouton" was ordered. In a few minutes each man was supplied with a piece of—possibly—mutton, about the size of a crown-piece, and one solitary potato, with its jacket on. This supper, which in amount scarcely came up to our expectations, was soon dispatched; and the waiter—who treated us with as much deference as if we had been so many field-marshals—was, with great facility, made to understand that we were desirous of paying for our refection. When the polite attendant had extracted about two francs from each of us, we departed, resolving that in future we would sup elsewhere.

After wandering about for some hours, it became evident that our time was nearly up, and that we should have to quickly retrace our steps to the square. There were clocks in various situations, the numerals on the dials of which were unintelligible to us; but from the position of the hands we accurately judged the hours. As we were already somewhat late, donkeys were proposed as a means to hasten our movements, and, on reaching the nearest donkey-stand, we selected and mounted suitable animals. Urged from behind by the sticks of their owners or drivers, the donkeys set off at full gallop. The speed was so great that it required our whole attention and utmost efforts to maintain our equilibrium by means of three of our limbs, the remaining one being fully employed in holding on our helmets. Surprised as we were at the running powers of the beasts, we were still more astonished at the abruptness with which they could bring themselves to a dead stop. The riders were happily not at a great height

from the causeway, or this custom of their steeds might have been fraught with serious results. As it was, several of the mounted found themselves seated on the street, a yard or two in advance of their respective donkeys, to the great diversion of the loungers in front of the cafés. Without breaking our necks, however, we arrived in camp in time to hear of an important addition to our number.

While most of the occupants of the tents were disporting themselves "down town," a prisoner of war, of the very highest rank, had been brought in under a strong escort. In the adjacent barrack a prison had quickly been extemporised for his reception, by placing wooden bars on the windows of a suitable apartment, and by mounting a numerous military guard to watch over him. This personage was one whose appearance has frequently, with varying degrees of verisimilitude, been depicted by artists and photographers, and though we had daily opportunities of seeing the famous captive, it is perhaps superfluous to describe his martial figure in this place. But he had, to the eye of a soldier, a commanding, undaunted aspect; and, notwithstanding his being the prime cause of bringing us some thousands of miles into the midst of scenes of hardship and danger, we could hardly repress a feeling of sympathy for him in the fallen condition of his fortunes. Two or three days subsequent to his arrival, the writer had the honour to be one of the custodians of the defeated chief, and this was a duty of some responsibility. Two sentinels were placed, with loaded rifles, at the door of his place of confinement. These men were instructed in terms full of meaning, "not to be afraid to exceed their duty" in the event of unforeseen accidents transpiring. The prison was three storeys above the parade-ground below. A verandah ran along the front of the building past the prisoner's windows. Here, at intervals, he was brought out to enjoy the open air. When walking up and down he was accompanied by the officer of the guard, and four men, having loaded arms, constantly had their eyes upon him. He always wore a white uniform, and being a stout, robust man, it became him well as he paced along the flags with firm, soldierlike tread. Conversing volubly with the officer, he seemed to be in good spirits, and but little cast down by his misfortunes. He was occasionally visited by the chiefs of our own legions, among others by a Royal

Duke, who drove up in a showy equipage, preceded by two running footmen, who, in getting over the ground, emulated the prowess of their compatriots the donkeys.

For about a fortnight nothing very remarkable occurred in the city, or at least in that portion of it which came under our observation. We had quite settled down to the daily routine of things in the square. The prisoner above referred to was removed to another part of the town, and we saw no more of him. We were literally besieged by swarms of native vendors of a wide variety of merchandise. Women offered for sale eggs, milk, and several kinds of fruits. There were numerous money-changers, who, by quibbling over coins of different nations, sometimes victimised some of our men. Itinerary tobacconists also appeared in great force, as well as men selling lemonade at a high profit; and even at the rate of a penny a glass large quantities of filtered water—a great luxury—were disposed of.

One evening we were ordered to be up and doing on the following morning sooner than usual, and somewhat before the time the priests were wont to commence their vocal exercises. There was to be held a grand review of our army, on the very ground whereupon stood our tents. Some scores of native artificers were engaged in the construction of a grand stand, from which point the notables of the nation, and others, were to view the marching legions pass by. Our own residences were in a short time entirely demolished, everything belonging to the camp was transferred into the palace-gardens to which I have previously alluded; and an extraordinary amount of brushing up clothes and buttons, burnishing swords or bayonets, and other like matters, ensued. We had lately received new regimentals, and the review promised to be—and undoubtedly was—a very gallant show. The helmets, originally white, had been painted brown, to resemble the sands of the desert in hue; but now it was thought necessary to re-whiten them in view of the approaching event. But pipeclay was not numbered among the geological products of this country, much to the sorrow, no doubt, of its military classes. We were therefore at a loss to find a substitute. Fertile in resource, some fellows bethought themselves of several barrels of lime, which were used by the natives in whitewashing the barrack on the opposite side of the square. And

in an hour's time, by this means, the head-pieces were rendered dazzlingly white, by being simply dipped into the barrels.

After having been kept standing under the blazing sun for a couple of hours or more, we at length approached the front of the grand stand, on which were gathered together a brilliant assembly of ladies, and groups of officers in varied uniforms. It being necessary, while passing this point, to look "straight to the front," we had only an unsatisfactory glimpse of the gay party; but it was impossible to avoid noticing, amid his staff, our great, our "only" general. There were present numbers of native gentry in splendid array. The fronts of their coats were one mass of gold and silver. Their sabres and scabbards were elaborately ornamented, and their appearance generally confirmed our opinions that they were but mere "carpet" knights. Some hours later we finished up for the day by replacing our marqueses and baggage in their old places on the square; and in the evening the writer formed one of a party sent a few miles to fire "farewell" shots over the grave of a departed comrade.

We latterly came to be on very friendly terms with the citizens, some of the lower orders of whom were useful to us in many ways. The ration beef was so tough that it was rarely eaten by our men, but it was eagerly looked for and devoured by the "blacks." We each had a practically unlimited allowance of this meat for dinner, and often gave it to our dusky friends, who, in return, cleaned our arms, washed clothing, or went errands for us "down town." They did the latter with remarkable honesty, for they might, with perfect ease, have decamped with the francs or dollars entrusted to them, though this sort of thing was almost unknown to happen. They were a patient, undemonstrative race of people, but of an indolent habit, which, probably, is inherent in those living in equatorial regions.

At last, orders were issued preparatory to leaving our now familiar quarters on the square. We had long expected and hoped that we would not be left behind as a part of an army of occupation in the country; and, though we had been tolerably comfortable and happy on the square, we were all well pleased when we came in sight of a certain three-decker, bearing a celebrated warrior's name, in Portsmouth Harbour.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

IV.

UNDER Mr. Pyecroft's management, the extensive prospect to be seen from Farington Folly was discussed, and Poet Pye interpreted, with, perhaps, more topographical correctness than under Claudia's sole guidance. It is easy to misplace or misname a church-spire, and hamlets, villages, and county towns appear as mere specks in the green wilderness that shimmers in the hot sunshine. A glimpse of the river may be seen here and there, but, for the most part, its course is marked only by lines of trees, and a thicker vegetation along its winding way. But there is no better vantage-ground than Faringdon Hill from which to survey the upper valley of the Thames, as it runs almost due eastwards at the foot of this steep ridge. Beneath you lies the whole fertile plain, extending even to the sources of the Thames, with the flanks of the Cotswold range bounding the distance—the Cotswolds, that stretch away into Shakespeare's county, and from whose summits, if we could make the aerial leap from here to there, we should see the Severn valley at our feet.

And, facing in an opposite direction, with a broad valley between, rise the wild and lonely downs, with their bare scarped summits, on one of the highest of which we can make out, shining white from the brown turf, the outlines of the famed White Horse. It is now nearly a thousand years since that rude outline was cut on the gaunt hillside, as a memorial of the great victory won there by Alfred and his brother Ethelred over the pirate Danes, and the simple monument has outlived all others of brass or marble, and still remains, renewed every now and then with religious care by the sturdy descendants of Alfred's Saxons. The last scouring of the White Horse was done only a few years ago, we were told by a passing countryman. And down below is the great Vale of the White Horse, with its broad plough-lands and pastures, its hamlets and farmhouses, ending in a misty haze where, when the evening sun lights up the valley, the velvet woods of Nuneham can be seen in the far distance, and Abingdon spire shining white among the shadowed woodlands.

Here you would think the valley opened into another country, watered by some other river, for in the prospect seen from the other side of the ridge the Thames, a

little country stream of no great importance, appears to—and does, in fact—take a bend to the northwards as if intending to make its way to the sea through the flats and fens of Northampton and Lincoln. But the river valley of which we get a glimpse on this side of the ridge has a far more important aspect. For, although only seen in the farthest distance, there is something in its dusky indistinctness that seems to tell of the teeming life and the busy haunts of men, of which here is the outer vestibule, for now, in spite of many a wind and twist on the way, the river has steadfastly set its course for London town.

"It is like the promised land," said Claudia softly; "only we are really to see it all, to float down past all these towns and villages, to stop wherever we please. Oh, ma'mselle, is it not charming ?"

"Much more charming," said mademoiselle, with a shrug, "if it were a boat on wheels and travelled along the grande route, or in that train, for instance," as a soft curl of steam traversed like a flying serpent the depths of the vale beneath, silently except when a murmur reached us as if from some resounding cave. "Ah, how much more charming that comfortable train which would bring us to Paddington in two hours !"

Upon which mademoiselle is good-humouredly attacked for suggesting such disagreeable realities. And after all what is it to arrive ? The end—the finishing-point, is a thing rather to be left in gentle obscurity than dragged into prominence, while the pleasures of the way are the most to be dwelt upon and encouraged, for surely the halts and stopping-places give the chief zest to the journey. And with that we left the pleasant prospect behind us, and descended into the town.

There was the church to be seen before we left, a roomy, handsome old church with in one corner the Pye chapel, ugly enough in itself, and of the most debased Gothic, but interesting from its monuments. There is one of a proud dame in starched Elizabethan ruff, with gilded stomacher and elaborately plaited petticoats, who seems of higher rank than that of the country squirearchy. But Pyecroft seemed doubtful whether this monument really belonged to the family, or had, perhaps, been placed there to be out of the way. As we stood looking at the monuments, mademoiselle had remained outside; the interior of churches gave the migraine, she said, and she had no taste for monuments; but Mr.

Pyecroft took advantage of the opportunity to read Claudia a little homily—how she was to prove herself worthy of the distinguished people who slept below, and to think less of her own individual pleasure than of the honour and credit of the family to which she belonged. Claudia, however, did not seem convinced.

"I would do a great deal to please you, mon père," she said affectionately; "but as for these others, they have had their day, and need not trouble themselves about me."

The most noted of the family, it seems, was one Sir Robert, who married a daughter of Hampden—the real original Hampden of the ship-money—a staunch Puritan under his wife's influence, who knocked his own house to pieces with cannon-balls, as it was held by the Royalists against his will, and in so doing contrived also to knock down the spire of the church, so the story goes, to corroborate which is the undoubted fact that the church is without a spire to this day. I can recognise the spirit of the man who knocked his own house to pieces surviving in the breast of my friend Charley, unmixed, however, with any trace of Puritanism. But is this one of the worthies whom Mr. Pyecroft holds out as a pattern for his daughter's emulation ?

The question is left unsettled, as we start on the drive for Charlwood Hall. Mr. Pyecroft drives a pair of good-looking screws in the family wagonette, but, screws as they are, they get over the ground at a good pace, and we are soon within sight of the woods of Charlwood. But before we reached the entrance-lodge there met us, coming in an opposite direction, another wagonette, drawn by another pair of screws, with a stout, rosy-looking man as charioteer. He saluted us with a vague but friendly signal, with whip and finger, once common among coaching men, and which still survives in a few old omnibus-drivers, and then suddenly, with a look of recognition on his face, he drew up beside us.

"What, Pyecroft !" cried the charioteer, in hoarse but friendly tones. "Well, I was thinking about you. I was just telling my daughters —there's where Pyecroft lives, my co-trustee. Extraordinary !"

"Why, you surely were not going to pass without giving me a call, Boothby ?"

Mr. Pyecroft's tones were friendly enough, but a chill seemed to have fallen upon him; his face looked quite grey and

pinched all of a sudden; perhaps it was only the contrast with the florid hues of his friend that made the difference.

"Yes, I was, though," cried Boothby with a jolly laugh. "Extraordinary, but so it is. Must get to Oxford to-night; promised my girls; twenty miles to drive; soon get twilight."

"Your daughters!" cried Pyecroft, raising his hat. "Delighted to know them, I'm sure. And this is my daughter."

"Is it so!" cried Boothby, chuckling again. "Extraordinary! The little chit that I can remember so high," marking off an imaginary space with the thong of his driving-whip. "And now, what's this I hear, settlements and so on. Oh, fie, Miss Pyecroft, and never asked your guardian's leave!"

"Are you my guardian?" cried Claudia boldly. "Then you are a very neglectful one, for I don't remember ever seeing you before."

"Quite right; perhaps you don't," cried Boothby, laughing again. "Neglectful! I should think so! Done nothing but sign my name every time your father asked me. Well, it will soon be over now. All kinds of good wishes."

Nothing would induce Mr. Boothby to make a halt at Charlwood Hall. No, he had promised his girls to reach Oxford that night, and he hadn't a moment to lose, but he sat there chatting, nevertheless, while the horses champed their bits and made feints of biting each other's necks. He had left Bristol a week ago, he said, and had been driving about the country ever since. The greatest fun in the world, he pronounced it. Had been missing from his home for ever so long; hadn't even a postal address. He hadn't received a letter all that time, or seen a newspaper. Mr. Pyecroft politely offered a copy of the day's paper, which he had in his pocket, but Boothby waved the offer aside. No, he was going to keep it up all the time—this jolly state of things.

"Best thing out," went on Boothby, red and radiant, mopping his face, that was like the rising sun, and flapping away the flies that were the one bitter drop in the cup of happiness. "Talk about the Rhine!" with a gesture of contempt; "this is the country for me! My girls have dragged me abroad every year; but no more of it. Why, even they agree this is better fun—don't you, girls?"

Thus appealed to, the girls, who were

pale and thin, but clever-looking, agreed that they had enjoyed their drive through the country very much; and at Oxford they hoped to take a boat for a few days.

"A boat!" cried Boothby with his jolly laugh. "They want to get me into their gimcrack little boats! A barge, if you like, or a lighter, with a team of horses to pull me along!" And Boothby laughed till the waggonette rolled about on its springs, while his delighted chuckle was the last sound we heard as the wheels of his vehicle rolled away in the distance.

"Why didn't you say, father," cried Claudia, "that we should be on the river, too? We might meet, perhaps."

"Well, you see," replied Mr. Pyecroft, pursing up his lips, "Boothby is a capital fellow—in business relations altogether splendid; but I don't think your mother would quite like—don't you see?—any intimacy."

Claudia was silent, but not altogether convinced, as we drove up to the Hall, whose grey weather-beaten front contrasted charmingly with the green lawn and flowering shrubs that surrounded it, while a background of tall elms gave a certain air of solemn repose. The Hall was a modest Tudor manor-house, with two projecting gables, whose mullioned windows twinkled in the sunshine in a setting of creepers and purple flowers, while the cool recessed centre was approached by a sombre projecting porch—a porch with an upper chamber—where you might fancy some old divine with a peaked beard sitting poring over his solemn tomes. The porch, however, was an addition, probably of Jacobean date, and it led into a hall which had also been remodelled at the same date, when the conveniences of family life took the place of the social, hospitable state of former days. Then the high old timber roof had been replaced by a handsome panelled ceiling, but the old open hearth remained at one end, and the room, cool and shaded, had been made the general summer room of family resort. Something of solemn gloom there was even in the filtered light that streamed through the diamond-latticed panes, where here and there a bit of stained glass disclosed some ancient coat-of-arms or quaint device, and still more in the massive buffets of polished oak, a little relieved by the stores of old blue Nankin china that loaded their shelves. The polished oaken floor was dark and solemn too, with its broken reflections of stray gleams of light that crept among the

ancient furniture, while a tarnished and faded Eastern rug in the centre, where stood a table well covered with books and periodicals, seemed the centre of such quiet family life as here might flourish; for here, too, was a work-basket, with patches of bright crewel-work, and threads of coloured silks and wool, that made a kind of sunshine in this shady place.

But the bright and girlish element in this scene, somewhat cold as well as stately and refined—the youthful element was evidently controlled and repressed. The central figure, all in keeping with its surroundings, was the tall, stately form of the lady of the manor; her handsome profile thrown out against the dark oak panelling, as she advanced with a stately kind of grace to welcome the newly-arrived guest.

And yet you felt that the dignified calm of Mrs. Pyecroft's face was only worn as a social mask, beneath which the lines that care and sorrow had traced were but half concealed. There was a protecting kind of tenderness in her manner to her husband—a tenderness that you missed altogether when she spoke to her daughter. Not that there was any unkindness in her tone; but a certain impatience of feminine ways, as if she thought that Providence had dealt hardly with her that she should have a daughter to manage.

To me Mrs. Pyecroft's manner was bright and cordial; she had many questions to ask about her nephew—questions which showed me that she was tolerably well-acquainted with his doings. And then she turned to her husband.

"Ernest, we have lost our neighbours, I hear, the Thomases—for the season, that is."

"Would it were for ever!" groaned Mr. Pyecroft.

"They have gone down the river," continued the wife. "We must try and overtake them, Mr. Penrice."

"Surely not," remonstrated Mr. Pyecroft.

"Indeed yes," persisted Mrs. Pyecroft. "I don't mind being civil to them on the water. And then I want Mr. Penrice to see Rebecca. She is the beauty of the neighbourhood—and we are renowned for pretty girls. And her voice, it would be charming to hear that voice on the water. And, Claudia," turning to her daughter with a slight air of malice, "you would be pleased to meet your old playfellow, the little boy you used to make love to so shamefully."

"My dear madame," here interposed mademoiselle, who had just entered. "Why shall you say *loff*? that is one word that shall not be said to my Claudia. That is one word that shall be what the Pacific Islanders call *Tapu*—forbidden, that is never to be spoke or even thought about."

Claudia only smiled rather disdainfully and devoted herself attentively to her crewels. But presently she looked up and said:

"Mother, we shall meet other friends on the river—perhaps Mr. Boothby and his two daughters."

"You have seen Mr. Boothby?" cried Mrs. Pyecroft, showing more excitement at the intelligence than there was any apparent cause to justify. "Ernest," she called to her husband, "Mr. Boothby here! Why was not I told?"

Mr. Pyecroft explained that we had only casually met him. "And he won't come to see us. Doesn't that look unfriendly?"

"He seemed very friendly indeed," remarked Claudia. "Extraordinarily so," mimicking Mr. Boothby's tones. "But how should he be my guardian?" she asked quickly.

"That was his nonsense, Claudia," said Mrs. Pyecroft rather severely. "Of course your father is your natural and only guardian."

Well, after dinner Mrs. Pyecroft drew me into a long and confidential talk about Charlwood and Claudia. For family reasons she said it was imperative that they should marry. And she spoke indignantly of Rebecca and her attempt to secure the young man for herself. In fact, I found that she contemplated a regular cutting-out expedition, hoping to carry off Charlwood bodily, from under the very guns of the enemy, and she looked to me to act as pilot and bring her alongside the pirate craft, while on the other hand I was bound by solemn promise to Charlwood to keep the two expeditions apart at all risks. The situation was a perplexing one, but this I left to the future to disentangle.

We were to start early in the morning to avoid the full heat of the day, and I heard Claudia on the lawn before six o'clock, in confabulation with Peter, the gardener, who had a certain interest in, or rather against the expedition, inasmuch as he had been told off to tow the boat for some miles down the stream, where the river was too narrow or too much choked with weeds to give free play to the oars.

Peter was sure it was going to rain, while Claudia indignantly pronounced that nothing was more improbable. Soon after I was giving my opinion on the subject. There had been rain in the night, and heavy masses of cloud hung about the horizon, while vapours rose gently from the meadows and curled over the surface of the water. But there was a general chirpiness among the birds, and a lazy kind of oily smoothness on the water, that showed rather for fine weather; and Claudia, delighted with my judgment, ran in to drag mademoiselle out of bed; while Peter and I went down to the boat-house to see that everything was ready.

The smooth, soft turf led down to the river's brink, and, following this, we came to a little creek—silent, still, and deep—across which was built the boat-house, where floated two or three boats and a canoe. We chose a pair-oared boat that would hold three sitters at a pinch; and Peter, still grumbling evil prophecies about the weather, went back to the house to fetch the wraps and the provisions; for we were to breakfast al-fresco at the first cool stopping-place.

Presently Claudia appeared, dragging along the reluctant mademoiselle, very sleepy and cross, and protesting that it was madness to start under such inclement skies, and piteously entreating to be allowed to return to her warm bed. But Claudia, without compunction, hurried mademoiselle into the boat. Mrs. Pyecroft had declined the early start at the last moment, but would join us later on in the day. Then Peter appeared with his load, his last remonstrances disregarded; the water-gate was thrown open, and we pushed out from the placid creek into the shining river.

In springing from the bow of the boat to gain the towpath on the other side of the river, Peter gave us a lurch that made poor mademoiselle shriek with terror. Let her get out and walk, she begged; she would gladly tramp all the way to London on the banks of the river. Looking back with a grin, Peter started with a rush that gave the boat another good lurch, as she first felt the pull of the line. But now we were fairly started, and Claudia soothed her companion's alarms; and as the boat glided smoothly along, the water rippling at her bows, mademoiselle allowed that the motion was soothing, and the surroundings pleasant, and presently she showed her confidence in the safety of the ship by sinking into a gentle slumber.

There was a charm indescribable about that morning as we glided easily along; Claudia, with the yoke-lines over her shoulders, dexterously avoiding shoals and sandbanks, and guiding us through the weedy channel. In the air was a pleasant earthy smell from the rain of last night, mingled with the scent of new-mown hay, and the delicate fragrance of the water-plants. Now and then we caught sight of the long range of hills on the right, the mists wreathing about their summits and mingling with the clouds above giving an aspect of mystery and even grandeur to the scene. Pleasant, too, were the locks with their creaking, weather-worn gates, with their general leakiness and cool splashiness, as we sank into their shady recesses. And then we came to a fine old time-worn bridge—Radcot Bridge, with its three high-crowned arches, and here in a shady nook, within sight of the bridge, we landed and prepared to breakfast.

Mademoiselle was thoroughly awake by this time, and good-tempered in the prospect of her morning *café au lait*. A fire was soon kindled and the kettle boiled, and Claudia arranged the breakfast on the greensward, a pleasant Arcadian meal, that refreshed and renovated the somewhat languid energies associated with early rising.

Who would think that in this quiet spot where alders and poplars wave, and the river flows lazily by, while cows stand knee-deep in the water in shaded nooks—who would think that anything stirring could have ever happened here? And yet there is a battle recorded—a battle of Radcot Bridge. Knights in panoply have charged across over those high-crowned arches, and swords clashed, and arrows hurtled through the air, while shouts and war-cries echoed from those placid-looking hills.

I don't think many people know much about this battle, but Mr. Pyecroft has kindly lent me a monograph written by him for some archaeological society; from which it appears that Radcot Bridge was the great battlefield of the century, and that to its result may be traced the establishment of our liberties, and of the judiciously tempered constitution under which we live.

It was when young King Richard sat on the throne of his grandfather, the mighty Edward—a throne that, like a skittish horse, required a good deal of sitting. A skipping King that ambled up and down,

rudely judged the rough barons about him, but a King who, in culture and refinement, was far in advance of the great feudatories of his kingdom. It was the reign of youth that he chose to inaugurate, a joyous renaissance of beauty and splendour, and then heavy old uncles interfered, and sour, self-seeking cousins. The great feudatories rose and marched upon London. The King was helpless beleaguered in the Tower; but one of his favourites, of the new order of things, Robert de Vere, who, as Duke of Ireland, might boast of the greatest titular dignity in the realm, was busy in the West, and in the Marches of Wales, where he had great influence, raising an army to rescue the King from his barons.

The one passable road from Wales was over Radcot Bridge—you may trace it now—rising the hill to Faringdon, and then along the ridge, and under it to Abingdon, and so by Maidenhead and Taplow to London; in fact, with little variation, the old coach-road to Gloucester and St. David's. Well, here lay the barons, on the flank of the hills above and drawn up in the meadows by the road, and De Vere and his tired, dusty levies straggling along the weary highway from the West. The bridge rises clear and fair before them, but the keen eye of De Vere, who rides in front of his host, discerns the gleam of arms among the trees. Everything depends upon crossing the river, and with the best of his knights De Vere charges across the bridge, to find himself in front of the serried ranks of wary Bolingbroke, who is the leader of the day. Few of the knights who charged across Radcot Bridge returned to tell the tale. The very rushes by the river seemed to turn to armed men, and surrounded and cut off from the bridge, De Vere was one of the few to escape by leaping his horse into the stream, and, accousted as he was, swimming to the opposite bank. And hence De Vere, concealed by friendly partisans among the country folk, found his way to the coast, and so to the Low Countries, where he died a few years after. But the winner of the fight, you will remember, lived to be King of England, as Henry the Fourth.

Now if De Vere had won this fight, and Henry had run away or been slain, there would probably have been no Henry the Fourth, no house of Lancaster, no civil wars, no Tudors, no Stuarts, no Long Parliament—perhaps no Parliament at all, and hence, as Pyecroft very judiciously

sums up, we may attribute all the blessings we now enjoy to the result of the battle of Radcot Bridge.

Claudia, too familiar, perhaps, with her father's pamphlet, does not seem impressed with his arguments. What is more important for us is that Peter leaves us at Radcot Bridge, and that we are thus, as it were, cut adrift from all ties of home, represented by the towing-line, and left to our own resources. Claudia feels that it is like a start in life, and is quite jubilant at Peter's departure, but mademoiselle is becoming anxious. "Where are we to sleep to-night?" asks she. "Oh, in the boat, I suppose, or perhaps up in a tree," replies Claudia airily.

We did not work very hard that day at the oar, but paddled, or, when there was any stream, floated lazily along, or where we caught the breeze, hoisted an impromptu sail—a stout shawl belonging to mademoiselle—resting a good deal in shady places, and talking and laughing a good deal at times, becoming pleasantly intimate and friendly, and yet not in a manner to rouse mademoiselle's anxiety. Only when the latter dragged in Charlwood's name—ah, why wasn't he here? How our happiness would be complete if that dear M. Charlwood were present!—her remarks were not received with any enthusiasm.

Drifting or paddling, we had passed through some miles of pleasant, fertile country. The hills now approached and now receded; and then showed right in front of us, barring up, as it seemed, the course of the river, which presently took a deep bend to the northwards, just under the slope of the hill which rose almost from its margin. And where the hills broke away and seemed to offer a passage to the river, Father Thames obstinately set his face in the other direction, so that the westerly breeze that had favoured us so long blew almost in our teeth.

Then we came to a ferry—Bablock Hithe, I think it was called—where the ferryman signalled to us to pull in; and there we found the elder Pyecrofts, who had, it appeared, found quarters for us all at Staunton Harcourt. Mr. Pyecroft had also some letters for me which had been sent on from Lechlade, and among them one in Charlwood's handwriting. Mrs. Pyecroft watched me narrowly as I read the letter; no doubt she had recognised the hand. There were only a few words, begging me to meet the writer at Oxford on the following—now this— evening, under

urgent and peculiar circumstances. Looking at the map, I saw that, while taking the bend of the river, there were at least ten miles between us and Oxford, yet that across the country, through Cumnor, it was only a walk of four miles or so. And I should see the village to which the fate of Amy Robsart had given a lugubrious fame.

"You need make no excuses, Mr. Penrice," said Mrs. Pyecroft, pressing my hand with fervour. "I think I know your errand. Bring him back to us—bring him back, and I shall bless you always."

But Claudia, I thought, looked sorry and regretful at my departure, and the notion gave me a throb of secret joy. For what had been but a dream of fancy hitherto had begun to assume definite form and power. Those dark, luminous eyes of hers that had drawn me thus far, now seemed to hold me in a magnetic kind of attraction. I watched for a glance from them as the ferryman landed me on the opposite shore, and they followed me as, leaning over mademoiselle's shoulder, Claudia made her wave adieux from them both.

"Come back—come back soon!" cried mademoiselle.

And Claudia's eyes said the same.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER I. TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

"TWENTY years, did you say, sir, since you were in these parts?"

"Twenty years," with a sigh. "A good big slice out of a lifetime, and yet I could fancy, sitting now and looking over the river and the meadows to the old grey spire yonder, that I had never stirred away from it. I suppose if I began to walk about the place, I should find it had spread and altered as all places do, but just here there is no change in anything except mine host. How long did you say poor old Braby has been dead?"

"It was six years last Michaelmas since he was took, sir, and he did not last more than a matter of a month or five weeks after. I had been here in the business, as you may say, one way and another, over ten years before that, and it was an understood thing——"

"That you took to it when he died? I see. You are not so much of a new comer as I supposed, and you will be all the better company. You must have known some of the people who were living down here

when I used to come to and fro myself—the Ellertons, for example?"

The landlord of the White Horse, to which old-fashioned designation the comfortable hostelry in the high street of West Saxford still clung—cast a sharp glance, in which was a mingling of surprise, satisfaction, and curiosity, at the guest by whom he was thus interrogated. It was a long time since people in that part of the world had been in the habit of talking of "the Ellertons." For the last fourteen or fifteen years there had only been one to talk of, and he had been too young and of too little consequence to afford much food for gossip. Certainly, this gentleman's reminiscences were of a time far removed, in more senses than one, from the present. The good man, regarding him critically, put his probable age a little on the right—that is to say, the sunny-side of fifty; a tall, straight, soldierly-looking man, his skin bronzed, his hair tinged with grey, the expression of his face thoughtful, and even dreamy, excepting when, as at this moment, it was roused into attention, and the quick, penetrating flash of the keen grey eyes told of a brain apt at receiving an impression and swift to analyse it. A gentleman, for one thing, mine host decided; in all probability an officer to boot—anyhow, a man used to command, and not easy to hoodwink.

"Mr. Ellerton of Hazeldean, you mean, sir, the poor gentleman that was murdered? I was not here at the time, but I have heard it talked about hundreds of times. I suppose there never was anything before or since that made such a stir in the neighbourhood. Is it possible you were staying here at the time, sir?"

The stranger nodded gravely.

"I was in the town at the time," he said. "And, more than that, I was acquainted with the family, and had a great respect for them. But I was only a bird of passage, and I never heard more of what followed than I could gather from the newspapers. There was an inquest, I believe, which was productive of nothing, and an adjourned enquiry which was not more satisfactory. As far as I could make out, there was not a single arrest made?"

"Not one, sir, for the very good reason that there was not a shadow of suspicion attaching to anybody. The poor gentleman had not an enemy in the world. It seemed so preposterous to think of murder in connection with a man so popular and so

beloved that, in spite of all the medical evidence to the contrary, there were those who clung to the belief that he had destroyed himself, for a long time, sir ; then there came the discovery of the pocket-book."

"Then there was a discovery of something at last ?"

"Just of that—nothing more. It was found at the bottom of a ditch a good step from the spot where the murder was committed, long enough afterwards. It was a common little leather pocket-book, lined with red silk, and with an elastic round it. There must have been hundreds and thousands like it, but Miss Dunscombe knew it, and would have sworn to it, if it would have done any good. She had missed it before, but she could not be sure Mr. Ellerton had had it about him that particular day ; and there was no means of proving that he had been plundered ; so she seems to have felt satisfied so far, until it turned up. It put a stop to the talk about suicide, which nobody who was open to conviction had ever lent an ear to from the first, and that was all the good it did."

"They did all they could, I suppose ? They did not spare money ! Stephen Ellerton had the name of being a rich man ?" the stranger asked curiously.

"He was like a good many others," the landlord replied with a shrug of his shoulders. "When his affairs came to be looked into, the money was not there. He had dabbled in foreign stocks, and goodness knows what, and had burned his fingers nicely. It was hard upon the women, for he had never been the man to enter into business matters at home, and they had not a notion but that he was as well off as he was reported to be. No doubt he was always expecting things to come round, as men who go in for that kind of gambling do ; and perhaps they would if he had had time. As it was, there was nothing to speak of for the widow and child."

"Good Heavens !" murmured the other.

The rest he knew—had known for twenty years. For this he was not prepared.

"Yes, it was hard lines," mine host continued complacently. "And she was not the woman to fight against it, and look at the bright side of things. From all I have ever heard, just the contrary—a spoilt, petted, tender sort of thing—good for nothing but to look pretty and be made a fuss over. If it had not been for her sister,

she'd have ended her days, most likely, in an asylum. I have no liking for Miss Dunscombe—she's as hard as the nether millstone, and as proud as Lucifer—but I will say she was the saving of those two—mother and son. And they do say she sacrificed her own prospects for them. There was a talk of her getting married just before the murder, and a very good match they say she would have made—nothing in the world against it, excepting a matter of five years or so on the wrong side. But never a word did anyone hear of it after her sister's trouble. They do say she sent the poor fellow about his business that very night."

"She did not lose much time in making up her mind to the sacrifice, if sacrifice it was," the other observed shortly. "And afterwards ? They must have left Hazel-dean, as a matter of course ?"

"They got out of it as quickly as ever they could. Nothing would have kept them there, after what had happened, though, if it had only been a question of expense, they might as well have remained there. People don't take to a house, nowadays even, when we are all so strong-minded, when there has been a crime like that committed—and they could not get rid of the place for years. It was thought they would leave West Saxford altogether; but Mrs. Ellerton had a fancy to stay within reach of her husband's grave, and sure enough, so she did, until they laid her in it, six years later."

"She died ?" with quick interest. "And the other—Miss Dunscombe—what became of her ?"

"She went on living here just the same, and her nephew along with her. If you'd take the trouble of changing places with me, sir, just for a minute, you'd have a good look at young Ellerton, and see for yourself what he has grown into. That's him walking along by the riverside with the young lady in the pink gown," and the landlord made way for his guest as he spoke.

The latter changed sides and looked out as he was requested. The window was open, for it was midsummer, and the weather was seasonable, and by dint of leaning out a little, he was able to watch the young couple for a considerable distance.

"He is a well-built young fellow," he said at length, drawing his head in, "and he bears himself like a gentleman, neither slouching nor swaggering. As far as I can see at this distance, he has a look of his

father—a good, honest face, not handsome. Who is the girl?"

" You may well ask that if you take any interest in the family," the other replied significantly. " The two are scarcely mentioned apart nowadays. There's no moral doubt but that they'll make a match of it, only the young lady, she's a coquette, and one man at a time dangling after her is not enough for her. You may remember Mr. Bevan, the town-clerk, sir? She is his daughter, and she'll be worth having, for she is the only child, and he is worth a heap of money."

" But how about the lad? He has no prospects, has he?"

The landlord laughed.

" That depends," he observed shrewdly, " upon what one takes to be prospects. He has no property to come into, if that is what you mean. But he has something here," tapping his forehead as he spoke. " And he has been put in the way of bringing it out, thanks to Mr. Bevan. The way that man has stood by the widow and the orphan warms one's heart to think of it! It will never be forgotten to him. I've had it from them that have been told of it by Miss Dunscombe herself, and she is not one that it is easy to move. He took that youngster into his office, without a penny, and he has pushed him on consistent ever since. He is four-and-twenty now, is young Ellerton; and it is the belief of everybody in West Saxford that Mr. Bevan is only waiting until the day he marries his daughter, to take him into partnership."

The stranger gave a slight shrug of his shoulders as he observed sententiously:

" It is better to be born lucky than rich." I don't think," he added, after a pause, " I have any very distinct recollection of the man you mean. Easy enough for the Nobody of twenty years since, to be Somebody to-day, and there were not many of the townspeople I knew anything about. I have a remembrance of the name, too. Was there a wife—a pretty, showy, little woman?"

" That is the same, sir. You've got it now, and no mistake!" mine host replied with animation. " She was just such another as her daughter. They do say she went nigh ruining him with her love of dress and her extravagance; and he could refuse her nothing, he just doated upon her. He made a sore trouble of losing her, but I'm far from thinking it the worst thing that could have happened him."

" And she—did she share this partiality of his for the family at Hazeldean?"

" Ah, that I can't say. The children were always a good deal together, if that counts for anything; but she died within a few months of Mrs. Ellerton herself, and that is a good many years ago now. No, I don't know that there was any uncommon friendliness between the families. At one time it was thought Mr. Bevan had a mind to console himself with Miss Dunscombe."

" With Miss Dunscombe!" in a short, startled voice. " Well, why not? It would have been suitable enough, I suppose. Miss Dunscombe must be getting on."

" Got on, sir, pretty considerably, I should say. She must be fifty, if she's a day, and she don't wear well. That hard sort don't. But I don't credit it myself. I don't see why, because a man is near in most things, it is to be taken for granted it is not in him to act open-handed in one. I am not one for spying out a motive for everything under the sun. There's many a kind thing done on impulse, say I."

" In the first instance, yes," assented the other. " But a man does not go on acting on impulse through a succession of years. There must have been a warm feeling somewhere in this case; but what matters, so long as one person, at least, is the better for it, and nobody the worse? She is a pretty little girl apparently, and I wish them both joy."

He rose from his chair as he spoke, and the cutlets he had ordered making their appearance at the same moment, the landlord left him to demolish them. He drank his wine, however, without eating much; it was not that the food was not to his taste, though, like most Anglo-Indians, he was fastidious, but his appetite had deserted him. He felt sad and preoccupied. The ghosts of old times were busy with him, and refused to be banished.

" What a fool I am!" he said to himself at last impatiently, " to let myself be preyed upon and put out by the thought of things which happened a lifetime ago. It was like my folly, breaking my journey here at all, and unkind of me, too, for I might have had another day with my little girl. But I always wanted to know whether, in all these years, there had been any light whatever thrown upon the miserable mystery of that man's death, and there seems to have been none—not a glimmer. And Margaret Dunscombe, here in the same place with me, a woman of fifty, a proverb of hardness and self-

sacrifice, goodness and repulsiveness combined, believing possibly as she believed then! But no, that she cannot. It was too monstrous!" and he pushed the table from him, and lighting his cigar, gave up the pretence of eating.

"Well," he soliloquised presently, somewhat more calmly. "Granted that it was her own doing, poor soul! it is she who has suffered for it—not I. She knew what she was entailing upon herself, when she returned my letter to me, unread, and I had done my part. Heaven knows I have no right to complain of the consequences to myself. If her life had been as happy as mine, if she had found in some other man all that I found in another woman—but what an 'if'! Well, she has one interest in life—her nephew is not less to her, perhaps, than my Mary to me—and she has the pull so far: she has not to go out to Ceylon, and leave the only creature she has left in the world to care for, behind her! Thank goodness it is only for two years, and then—home and peace!"

The June evening was wearing on apace, and it occurred to him that he could spend it more pleasantly and profitably reconnoitring the once familiar neighbourhood, than taking his ease at his inn. He might probably have found a cicerone in his host, had he cared for one; but he had learned all he wished to know, and was not in a talkative mood; so he sallied forth alone. The main street, along which he took his way, was too little altered for him to detect any change in it; but when he once got, so to say, clear of the body of the town, he found the usual mushroom growth of villas of various sizes, and in various styles, surrounding it. Almost mechanically he had taken the direction of Hazeldean, and the former unoccupied space between the quaint old house and the original limits of West Saxford, as he had known it, was now so built over, that he found himself at the gates before he knew where he was. Time, unkind to it in one respect, had been the reverse in another, and the trees had so grown up around it, that its neighbours gained little by their proximity. The shrubbery, in which its master had met his death, looked denser and darker than of old, and involuntarily, perhaps unconsciously, Colonel Hamilton quickened his steps as he passed it. Beyond it came a

fresh series of more modern residences, and in the garden of one of these, daintily clad in delicate muslin and ribbons, and hanging on the arm of an elderly man of grave and somewhat careworn aspect, was the girl he had seen, earlier in the evening, with young Ellerton. Twenty years had passed over the lawyer's head, since the other had seen him; but, apart from the clue afforded by his daughter's presence, the latter recognised the face though he had failed to recognise the name.

In a moment he remembered not only him, but how and where they had last confronted each other.

"The last day I was in West Saxford," he thought, as, standing where he could see without being seen, he watched the two, the girl evidently coaxing her father for something. "The very day of the murder. I remember it well enough. Fortescue wanted to speak to him about an investment, and I went into the private room behind the office, and made a third at the interview. Poor old Fortescue! I wonder what became of him. He was never satisfied that he was doing the best with his money. And this man has made a pot of it! Not been any more scrupulous than the rest of them, I imagine. Strange that Stephen Ellerton's son should be the one to profit by it."

He lounged on, his thoughts outstripping his steps, and paying little attention to surrounding objects, for another hour or more, until the dusk became so apparent as to recall his mind to their contemplation. Then he turned, and began to retrace his steps with greater alacrity. The gas was lighted in a pretty sitting-room on the ground-floor of Mr. Bevan's house, and he himself sat in an armchair, with his back to the window, reading. His daughter was not there, but the colonel, passing this time on the opposite side of the road, saw her, too, on the garden-path, this time not with her father, and not arm-in-arm. On the contrary, the man who was with her was young, and his arm encircled her waist. The unsuspected observer shrugged his shoulders and smiled with some amusement—yet not without a tinge of regretful pity—as he walked on.

"Mine host was right," he said to himself. "She is not content to have one string to her bow, for, whoever that may be, it is not Ellerton."

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PROVIDENT LIFE OFFICE.

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*Merchants, Traders, and others requiring the full use of their Capital,
and desiring a Life Policy at the cheapest present outlay, are invited to
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50, REGENT ST., W., & 14, CORNHILL, E.C.,
LONDON.

FOUNDED 1806.

PROVIDENT LIFE OFFICE

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THE PROVIDENT possesses the advantages of a MUTUAL OFFICE, with the additional security of a Subscribed Capital.

Out of £249,515, the amount of Profit divided in 1883, the Cash sum of £241,370 was allotted among the various Policies, yielding Bonuses payable at death exceeding £340,000. The balance, £8,145, only was apportioned to the Shareholders.

PURCHASE OF POLICIES.

Policies granted for the whole term of life will be purchased by the Office any time after the payment of a YEAR'S FULL PREMIUM as distinct from a Half-Credit Premium. The surrender value of a Policy depends upon the age of the life and the duration of the assurance. Upon a Bonus Policy it is never, under any circumstances, less than one-third of the amount of Premium paid by the Assured.

It is the practice of the Office to pay the surrender value of a lapsed Policy if applied for within six years.

PAID-UP POLICIES IN LIEU OF SURRENDER VALUES.

Persons who may be unable, through adverse circumstances or otherwise, to continue their assurances, can, if preferred, receive a PAID-UP POLICY computed upon liberal terms in lieu of the surrender value in cash.

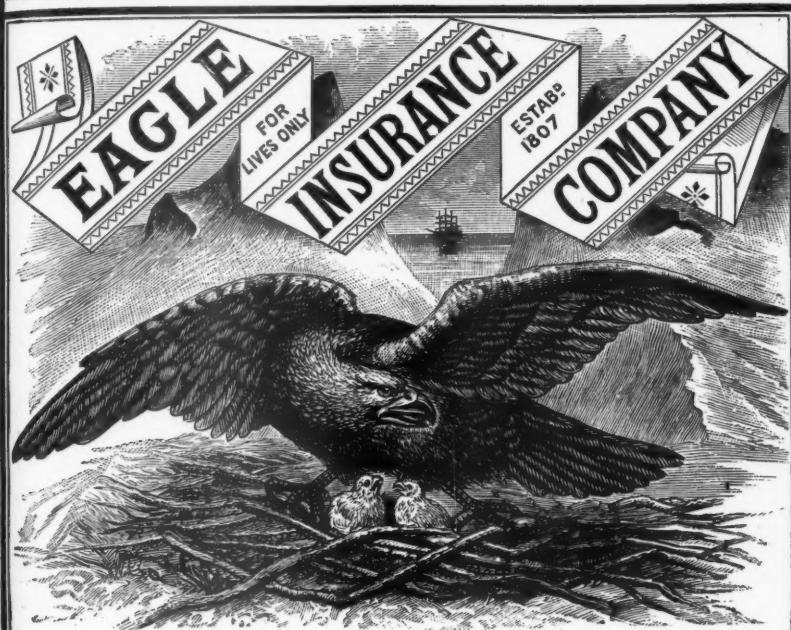
Full information given upon application to

CHARLES STEVENS,

Secretary.

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79, PALL MALL, LONDON.

At the last Valuation (1882) the sum of £173,000 was set apart for the Assured under Participating Policies. The result is a Cash Bonus to Policies of £1,000, as follows:—

| AGE AT ENTRY. | PRESENT AGES. | CASH BONUS. |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 20 | 25 | £26 10 0 |
| 30 | 35 | £28 10 0 |
| 40 | 45 | £30 10 0 |
| 50 | 55 | £32 10 0 |

These Bonuses can be exchanged for Reversionary Additions or for Reductions of Premium.

In addition to the four-fifths of the estimated Surplus allotted to the Assured with Profits, **interim Bonuses** are given on Policies of 5 years old and upwards, which become Claims between any two Valuations. The Assured have thus practically an **ANNUAL BONUS**. In this manner more than £15,000 was distributed during the last quinquennium.

*During the past 36 years the Company has paid in
Claims £7,625,503*

*And divided Bonuses amongst the Assured, exclusive of
those taken in Reduction of Premium, amounting to £979,525*

EAGLE INSURANCE COMPANY.

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Actuary and Secretary.

GEORGE HUMPHREYS, Esq., M.A.

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS.—By the terms of the Company's Policies, Claims will be paid Three Calendar Months after the **DATE OF THE DEATH** of the Assured, provided that in the meantime proof satisfactory to the Directors shall have been given of such death. But upon completion of the needful documents, the Directors will pay the sum immediately, deducting only discount for the intervening time.

ANNUAL PREMIUMS FOR ASSURANCE OF £100 ON A SINGLE LIFE. WITH PROFITS.

| | £ s. d. | | | |
|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|----|---------|
| 11 | 1 16 2 | 21 | 2 2 4 | 31 | 2 11 10 | 41 | 3 7 4 | 51 | 4 14 10 |
| 12 | 1 16 8 | 22 | 2 3 1 | 32 | 2 13 1 | 42 | 3 9 5 | 52 | 4 18 6 |
| 13 | 1 17 2 | 23 | 2 3 11 | 33 | 2 14 4 | 43 | 3 11 8 | 53 | 5 2 4 |
| 14 | 1 17 9 | 24 | 2 4 9 | 34 | 2 15 8 | 44 | 3 14 0 | 54 | 5 6 6 |
| 15 | 1 18 4 | 25 | 2 5 7 | 35 | 2 17 1 | 45 | 3 16 6 | 55 | 5 10 11 |
| 16 | 1 18 11 | 26 | 2 6 6 | 36 | 2 18 7 | 46 | 3 19 2 | 56 | 5 15 7 |
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| 18 | 2 0 2 | 28 | 2 8 6 | 38 | 3 1 10 | 48 | 4 4 10 | 58 | 6 5 10 |
| 19 | 2 0 10 | 29 | 2 9 7 | 39 | 3 3 7 | 49 | 4 8 0 | 59 | 6 11 5 |
| 20 | 2 1 7 | 30 | 2 10 8 | 40 | 3 5 5 | 50 | 4 11 4 | 60 | 6 17 4 |

REDUCED RATES FOR THE FIRST FIVE YEARS.

Policies under this Table enter the Profit Class after being in existence Five Years.

| | 1st 5 years. WITHOUT PROFITS. | Remainder of Life. WITH PROFITS. | | 1st 5 years. WITHOUT PROFITS. | Remainder of Life. WITH PROFITS. |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|----|-------------------------------------|--|
| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | | £ s. d. | £ s. d. |
| 26 | 1 9 1 | 2 10 10 | 36 | 1 12 7 | 3 5 2 |
| 27 | 1 9 3 | 2 12 0 | 37 | 1 13 6 | 3 7 0 |
| 28 | 1 9 5 | 2 13 2 | 38 | 1 14 6 | 3 9 0 |
| 29 | 1 9 8 | 2 14 5 | 39 | 1 15 7 | 3 11 2 |
| 30 | 1 10 0 | 2 15 8 | 40 | 1 16 8 | 3 13 5 |
| 31 | 1 10 3 | 2 17 1 | 41 | 1 17 11 | 3 15 10 |
| 32 | 1 10 7 | 2 18 6 | 42 | 1 19 2 | 3 18 4 |
| 33 | 1 10 11 | 3 0 0 | 43 | 2 0 7 | 4 1 2 |
| 34 | 1 11 3 | 3 1 8 | 44 | 2 2 0 | 4 4 0 |
| 35 | 1 11 8 | 3 3 4 | 45 | 2 3 7 | 4 7 2 |

Annual Reports, Prospectuses, and Forms may be had, or will be sent, Post-free, on application at the Office, or to any of the Company's Agents.

The following are some of the Reasons why Assurances may be advantageously effected with the— Imperial Life Office.

SECURITY.

- 1.—The Assurance Fund alone amounts to 12 times the Annual Premium Income, and the Total Invested Assets provide £125 in hand for every £100 of estimated Liability.
- 2.—The Assured have in addition the security of a large Subscribed Capital held by a wealthy body of Proprietors.
- 3.—The remuneration of the Proprietors is Strictly Limited by the Company's Deed of Settlement to the interest of their own Capital and one fifth share of the Profits every Five Years.
- 4.—The Assured incur no Liability of Partnership.

LIBERALITY.

- 5.—Policies are issued which entitle the Lives Assured to wide limits of Free Residence, and to Free Travelling all over the world.
- 6.—All Claims are payable on proof of Death and Title.
- 7.—A Specimen Table of Guaranteed Surrender Values is published.
- 8.—Paid-up Policies are Issued, if desired, in lieu of the payment of a Cash Surrender Value.
- 9.—Loans are Granted for any amount within the Surrender Value, thus enabling the Assured to keep the policy in force as long as any Value remains.
- 10.—Policies may be Revived at any time within a year of their lapsing.
- 11.—If a Policy lapse and be not revived, Notice is given, and the Surrender Value is held at the Disposal of the Legal Owner at any time within six years.

PROFIT.

- 12.—Four-fifths of the Entire Profit of the business are Divided among participating Policy-holders.
- 13.—The non-participating part of the business, yielding Four-fifths of its profit to the Participating Policy-holders, is estimated to fully compensate for the Proprietors' Share of Quinquennial Profit.
- 14.—The advantage of a Mutual Office are thus combined with the security afforded by a Proprietary one.
- 15.—The existing Bonuses vary from £1 10s. on Policies recently effected to £110 on the oldest Policies for each £100 of the original Sum Assured.
- 16.—The Bonuses are Declared on Previous Bonuses as well as on the Original Sum Assured.
- 17.—The Bonuses are Appropriated to the Assured as soon as declared, and are not contingent until a specified and sometimes a very large number of Premiums has been paid.

N.B.—All participating Policies effected before the 31st of January next will obtain an additional Year's Share of the Profits in 1886 over later entrants.

ESTABLISHED 1820.

Imperial

Life

Office.

ENDOWMENTS TO CHILDREN.

The Directors invite attention to an entirely New Plan of securing Endowments, under which the Premium ceases on the death of the parent, and the Company then holds the Sum Assured in trust for the Children until the expiration of a term of years fixed at the outset.

One Premium, if the parent die, secures the full Sum Assured,
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Total Claims Paid £3,750,000.

1, OLD BROAD STREET,
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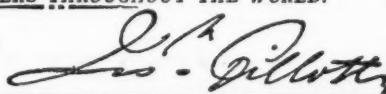
COLD MEDAL

PARIS, 1878.

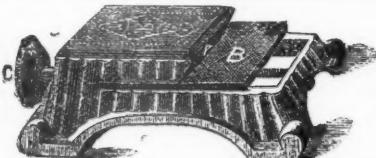
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Is the wonder of the age. It will put a better edge on a pair of scissors in ten seconds than any grinder can in ten minutes ; anyone can use it, and it will never wear out ; the directions are most simple, and not the least particle of skill is required ; it does not wear away the scissors in the least ; no household should be without one. Nothing can be worse when you have work to do than a blunt pair of scissors, but the trouble of sending them to a grinder, and the doubt if they will come home really sharp, also the certainty that they will be ground away to a considerable extent, and perhaps ruined, makes people put up with them, much to their discomfort. Mr. Scissor Sharpener gets over all this difficulty, and will be found not only useful but a perfect blessing.

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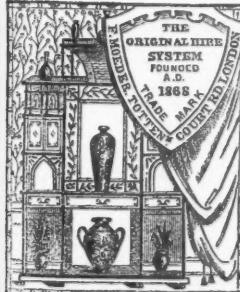
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Accumulated Fund £4,000,000]

ANNUAL INCOME £285,000.

(Established 1835.)

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